

SEEN & HEARD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & THEIR FAMILIES • THE DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT EARNS TOP HONORS IN FIRST-EVER GOVERNOR'S TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARD

Since taking office in 2000, Governor Ruth Ann Minner has maximized opportunities to recognize the outstanding work done by Delaware's state employees. While individual recognition is a great honor, a myriad of teams are working together to achieve great results throughout the State that also deserve to be acknowledged for their efforts.

Thus, the Governor's Team Excellence Award is designed to encourage teamwork by recognizing teams that excel in leadership abilities and team operation, use best practices and superior customer service, and produce tangible results. Twenty-six teams were nominated for the award and in addition to the recipient, five teams were selected as finalists.

"We established this award to recognize the significant contributions state employees make to the efficiency of state government as they serve our citizens every day," Governor Minner said. "Consistent with my priority for a well managed state government, I encourage employees and agencies to work together to achieve outstanding results, and I'm pleased to recognize these outstanding teams."

On January 30, 2006, Governor Minner presented her first-ever Governor's Team Excellence award to the Community Services Re-Engineering Team of the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS), Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. "Our staff has made teamwork a priority in order to get the best results for the kids in our care," says Cari DeSantis, cabinet secretary for the Children's Department. "We submitted four nominations for this award and are honored to have our Families and Communities Together (F.A.C.T.) Grant project team selected as a finalist, along with our Community Services Re-Engineering team receiving the award."

The ten-member Community Services Re-Engineering Team was chosen for its efforts to improve the youth probation system. The team proposed a model that resulted in more youth participating in structured activities, a higher rate of compliance with conditions of probation, fewer youth rejoining the system after their release and increased employee satisfaction.



Members of the Community Services Re-engineering team pose with Governor Minner and Secretary DeSantis. Back row (L to R) - Shirley Lerner, Elaine Stormer, Charlita Shamburger, Kim Pepper and Lisa DiStefano. Front row (L to R) - Joe Conaway, Nancy Pearsall, Rick Shaw, Governor Minner, Deb O'Neal, Joe Vattilana and Secretary DeSantis.

"The entire process of re-engineering community services was truly a group effort," says Deb O'Neal, YRS training administrator. "Winning the award reinforced creativity, innovation and the importance of teamwork."



Governor Minner addresses the crowd at the Governor's Team Excellence Award presentation.

I'm proud to have had the opportunity to work with this team on this worthwhile project."

The F.A.C.T. grant has been in place for six years to provide children in need of mental health services with a network of community support, family participation and collaborative work so they would be able to thrive in their homes and communities instead of institutional settings.

"The work of the F.A.C.T. Grant project team led to our department initiative to grow a System of Care approach for all of Delaware's Children," adds Secretary DeSantis. "The grant will end early in Fiscal Year '07 and we are delighted Governor Minner has included the conversion of those federal dollars to state funding in her Recommended Budget, so we can continue to work with children and families in this very successful program."

The remaining four finalists were: the Bureau of Tax Collections Process Improvement Team, the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Team, the Delaware Portal Team and the E-Z Pass Operations Team. Other teams nominated by the Children's Department included: the Court Liaison's team and the Reports Project team.

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH WILMINGTON POLICE TO HELP TRAUMATIZED YOUTH

It's a sad fact: too many youth in our community are affected by violence. Fortunately, we can help our children feel safe and prevent long-lasting problems by providing support for them and their families at the first sign of trauma.

The Children's Department's Division of Child Mental Health Services, in cooperation with the Division of Family Services, has partnered with the Wilmington Police Department in a new venture called the Child Development-Community Policing (CD-CP) program. Mental health professionals and Wilmington police officers are working in an effort to develop a closer relationship with one another, become familiar with each others' procedures and mandates, and strengthen bonds with local community groups and organizations.

The purpose of the program is to quickly identify children who have been exposed to violence and who have numerous risk factors, strengthen their families to support their

children and identify resources, both within the Children's Department and in the community, to help them address their challenges.



Bob Dunleavy speaks of his experience with the Child Development-Community Policing project at a press conference this February.

"The CDCP program is entirely about children and their families," says Bob Dunleavy, director of crisis services. "The partnerships are important but this program's goal, heart and soul, is entirely about helping children grow up healthy."

Studies reveal that exposure to multiple forms of violence, including domestic violence, child abuse, and general family climate of hostility, doubles the risk of youth that have experienced or committed violence. Research also suggests the number of risk factors that a child experiences is predictive of future delinquency, but also points out that the earlier the intervention the better the outcomes for children.

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

There is a famous quote by author Ben Sweetland that reads, "Success is a journey, not a destination." This statement rings true throughout the Children's Department and across children's services.

Our Department was able to start off 2006 with many successes. In January, Governor Ruth Ann Minner announced that our own YRS Community Services Re-engineering team had earned the first-ever Governor's Team Excellence Award. And in February, we joined the City of Wilmington in launching a community policing program, helping children who are the victims or witnesses of violence to receive mental health services more quickly. We also witnessed success through the eyes of those we serve. Five youth at our Ferris School for Boys worked hard and completed the necessary requirements to earn their high school diploma or General Educational Development certificates.

Even with all of these great milestones, it's important to remember there is still work to be done. Our focus as we continue this journey is to secure a future system of care that delivers consistent positive results for our kids.

This requires us to persistently focus on our vision to Think of the Child First. The road we're on is full of uphill struggles. One such battle is the growing population of children in this state. The number of teenagers in Delaware has been rising steadily during this decade, and we have felt their presence in all of our service areas. A virtual wave of teenagers will really hit us over the next five years. And when they arrive on our doorstep, they'll bring with them the most complex set of challenges. As Delaware is inhabited by more and more children, and as those children present with more complex and challenging issues, it becomes the responsibility of the 1200-plus people who are the Delaware Children's Department, our partners and our providers to enthusiastically and creatively pursue every opportunity to face this upward climb. It's imperative for us to be willing to do more — to stretch beyond what most reasonable people might consider to be unreasonable. For this journey is far from over, and there will always be another hill to climb.

Cari DeSantis

Cari DeSantis,
Cabinet Secretary

SAVE THE DATE!

The Delaware Children's Department
16th Annual Prevention & Early Intervention Forum
April 24 - 25, 2006
Spencer Hotel, Wilmington, Delaware
Keynote Speakers: Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund and Shay Bilchik, director of the Child Welfare League of America.

2005 STATE EMPLOYEES' CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

Employees of the Children's Department once again demonstrated their dedication towards helping those less fortunate. Staff donated over \$20,000 in payroll deductions and one-time donations during the State Employees' Charitable Campaign (SECC), benefiting the United Way and dozens of their recipient agencies, many of which directly serve our children and their families.



State treasurer and SECC chair Jack Markell joins SECC steering committee members Jenny Garey, Rosey Vanderhoogt, Phyll'icia Dixon and Helen Kruger, along with Drew Langloh, president of the United Way of Delaware, at the SECC Celebration in the Delaware Agricultural Museum.

The Department's efforts helped the State exceed its goal of \$500,000 by more than \$60,000—a truly exceptional feat considering the outpouring of contributions in response to the great tragedies wrought by the devastating hurricanes and earthquakes in 2005 and the tsunami at the end of 2004.

"State employees opened their hearts and wallets at a time of need," said State Treasurer Jack Markell. "Thousands of Delawareans will benefit from their generous contributions. Thanks to the strong support of Governor Minner and the hard work of the Steering Committee as well as agency captains and leaders, we significantly exceeded our goal."

The Department's efforts were accomplished by a strong cross-divisional team that included: Kim Gabrielli and Monica Alvarez (Office of Prevention and Early Intervention); Johnny Dowell and Kim Pepper (Youth Rehabilitative Services); Bob Harrity, Eryl Roth, Mike Alfree, Kenny Vanderslice and Merle Wannamaker (Management Support Services); Kristin Clossen, Eileen Welch, Mark Wells, Joann Bruch and Steve Sanborn (Division of Family Services); Susan Burns (Office of the Secretary); and many others who coordinated their office and regional efforts. SECC Department co-chairs, Joe Smack (DFS) and Kelly Savacool (OS) spearheaded the campaign.

The committee held several hot dog sales and a highly successful soup sale on a bitterly cold day, coordinated a kickoff event featuring several of the United Way agencies and hosted a touchdown event attended by dozens of staff who enjoyed food and door-prizes.

"Increased contributions from State employees and retirees are critically important to charitable organizations in Delaware," said Drew Langloh, president of the United Way of Delaware. "Donations made through the SECC make it possible for local organizations to provide services that help our most needy individuals and families. We owe a great deal of gratitude to the State's generous employees. Not only have they dedicated their lives to public service — they've also found it in their hearts to help even more Delawareans this year through their charitable giving."

PUTTING SOC PRINCIPLES IN ACTION



There has been a lot of talk about System of Care; now it is time to help staff put SOC into Action! The SOC in Action group is focused on raising awareness regarding the SOC philosophy and bridging the gap between philosophy and practice. Department staff had opportunities to hear about and learn the seven System of Care principles, but what do these principles look like in action? SOC in Action aims to shed some light on what each principle looks like in practice, share examples of teams who have made SOC work and answer your questions!

System of Care Principles:

1. Practice is individualized
2. Services are Appropriate in Type and Duration
3. Child Centered and Family Focused
4. Care is Community-Based
5. Care is Culturally Competent
6. Care is Seamless, Within and Across Systems
7. Teams Develop and Manage Care

Supervisors, managers and frontline workers had the opportunity to participate in SOC Level II Training. Much of this training focused on forming and leading the team. Many people are finding it challenging to build, coordinate and manage teams, so that seems to make the 7th principle a logical starting point. The following information includes some pointers on how to form a team, what it should look like and what the principle looks like in action. Keep a look out for more information...

Send your questions about System of Care & how to put the principles into action to susan.burns@state.de.us. The SOC in Action team will do their best to answer your questions and provide answers to you via the intranet, this newsletter or email. The questions/answers will be shared department-wide to help others who are also working hard to bring SOC to life!

Principle 7 - Teams Develop and Manage Care in action:

- Family (parent) develops the team with worker support.
- Informal supports (at least 1) are team members.
 - Informal support person is someone the family would like to have at the team meeting to support them (extended family, friends, neighbors, church members, community center staff, mentor, etc.)
- Informal supports usually stick around long after we do, so they are critical.
- Professionals (formal supports) working with the child &/or family are included on the team (school staff, mental health).
- The family organizes the team with worker support. This empowers the family and puts them in the lead to plan for their child and family.
 - Ask the parent to invite team members to the meeting.
 - Parents should call some of the members, at least the informal support team members.
- The family decides, or participates in the decision, regarding when the meetings will be held.
 - Avoid mandating families to appear at a meeting scheduled by professionals.
- The worker works with the family before the first meeting to ensure they feel comfortable with the team process and they are prepared.
 - Explain the team process and roles of team members (DSCYF worker, parent, others).
- Begin to develop a collaborative partnership with the parent by focusing on the importance of parents contributing to child/family decisions.
- The lead worker gathers information from each team member about strengths, concerns/worries and the team develops the goals together.
 - What is everyone concerned about?
 - What do you need so your concerns will go away?
 - How can the need be translated into a goal?
 - Always ask the parent if this goal can be obtained, given their family situation and resources

FERRIS YOUTH CELEBRATE PERSONAL MILESTONES AT GRADUATION CEREMONY

Five youth at Ferris School for boys shared a special moment together with friends, family and faculty at a moving graduation ceremony this February.

Upon entering Ferris, Brian S. and Thomas G. were both high school seniors. The two worked diligently to earn the necessary credits needed to complete Delaware's requirements and receive their high school diplomas.



Bryan S. gives a speech about accomplishing his dreams after receiving his high school diploma at Ferris School.

"I worked and I strived to keep hope alive," said Thomas G. in his speech to peers, relatives and Ferris staff. "When my pride seemed to die, I dreamed that I could succeed. I hoped and believed to be the first in my immediate family to graduate. I kept hold of my faith, steadfast in the race, and made it in a cap and a gown. I'm a positive role model now."

He and Brian S. were not alone in their efforts. Franklin H., Mike K. and George O. became the 48th, 49th and 50th students at Ferris to earn their General Education Development certificates since the inception of the more rigorous battery of tests introduced in 2002. "My coming here has been a life altering experience," explained Mike K. "It has helped me open so many doors to succeed in the future and someday raise my family correctly."

All five students delivered inspirational speeches explaining that dedication to a dream can culminate in success. One student wants to be an entrepreneur; another aspires to become a doctor, while the other three simply wish to explore the various opportunities now available to them.

"In a school that no one wants to attend, it is satisfying to hear students express their gratitude to the staff teachers who helped them accomplish a goal that they all thought was unattainable," said Ferris' principal, Dolores Allen-McIntyre. "[There is] no doubt that these five students will probably always remember everything about this day. Now they are prepared to take the next step in their lives and we wish them continued success."

Ferris School continues its goal to support our youth towards change and transformation through treatment and "educational excellence everyday, for every student." The rehabilitation that occurs for youth while in the care of Ferris staff provides the structure and reinforcements that the students need to build upon as they seek direction and redirection daily. In the continuing efforts to inspire our youth, it is with great hope that as they transition by to their school, home, and community our youth will be embrace with another chance to fulfill their accomplished dreams with support.



Students who received their high school diploma pose for pictures with Department staff. Back row (L to R) - Franklin H., Thomas G., Annette Miller (youth rehabilitation program manager), Dolores Allen-McIntyre (Ferris School principal), and Terry Senio (education supervisor). Front row (L to R) - Michael K., Bryan S. and George O.

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: OFFICE OF PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The Office of Prevention and Early Intervention (OPEI) moved under the Office of the Secretary at the beginning of FY06 and has been busy crafting new partnerships and initiatives.

With a mission to provide prevention and early intervention opportunities and services that strengthen children, families and communities, OPEI's goals are threefold: to reduce the number of children entering the care of the Department, to facilitate transitions of children in care back to the community and to reduce the number of children re-entering.

OPEI has been undergoing a strategic shift in service delivery to promote prevention at all levels of the Department. The Office emphasizes prevention around child abuse and neglect, dependency, juvenile delinquency and truancy, mental health disorders and drug and alcohol abuse among children and youth. Through rigorously researched and tested programming, OPEI has also created a menu of services that includes several science-based models.



Laura Ames of West End Neighborhood House, Inc., discusses a poster with a Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC) participant at the Thomas A. Edison Charter School. CLFC is a drug and alcohol prevention program funded and monitored by OPEI.

OPEI is evolving, as it continues on its journey towards making our community an increasingly vital part of the Department's System of Care. This is evident through our 52 school-based family crisis therapists, who work with children in grades K-3, the expansion of funding for Departmental-level initiatives, and national promotion and awareness of the annual prevention and early intervention forum.



Melanie Brown of West End Neighborhood House, Inc., works with a Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC) participant at the Thomas A. Edison Charter School. CLFC is a drug and alcohol prevention program funded and monitored by OPEI.

OPEI is also helping build the capacity of community organizations to ensure continuity of care and effective service delivery for our children and families. In order to promote the Department's prevention messages consistently and effectively, OPEI continues to offer videos, pamphlets, curriculums and books on an array of topics free of charge through the Office of Prevention Resource Center (OPRC).

To find out more about the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention, you can visit them on the web at www.state.de.us/kids (under Prevention Programs) or call (302) 892-4500.

STRATEGIC PLAN PROVIDES PATH FORWARD FOR CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT, PARTNERS

On any given day, the Delaware Children's Department serves between 350-450 more children compared to one year ago. This increase alludes to a wave of teenagers coming our way amidst the rising costs of providing necessary services, a fragile infrastructure supporting the service delivery system and a juvenile justice system that is antiquated and significantly under-resourced.

In order to prepare for these challenges, Secretary DeSantis has outlined a four-year plan, which seeks to invest more than \$20 million into Delaware's children in crisis. This plan addresses two main factors: the structural deficits in the Department's core operations to meet the growing demand for services and increasing cost-shifting from the federal government, complete the recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Foster Care, and support the 21st century delivery approach; and a reform of juvenile justice services, emphasizing embedding child mental health services and nationally proven-effective prevention and treatment programming in the rehabilitative system. To view the plan in its entirety, please visit our website at www.state.de.us/kids and click on "About the Department."

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Youth Interventions

- Prevention/early intervention services
- Community based treatment services
- Girls Programming
- Rehabilitation residential services
- After care services

Mental/Behavioral Health Services

- Mental health assessments
- Crisis beds
- Intensive community interventions
- Clinical monitoring

Vocational Education

Basic Infrastructure

- Staffing to meet workload requirements
- Full-time staffing for full-time duties
- Close service gaps

BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Staffing to Adjusted Caseload Standards
- Casual/Seasonal Conversions
- Technology Improvements
- Fill Service Gaps
- Prevention/Early Intervention Emphasis

TEAM SPIRIT AWARD

Teamwork is essential in order to accomplish the many goals of the Department. About 1,200 persons throughout the state are responsible for numerous tasks throughout the day, month and year. The "Team Spirit Award" strives to recognize a group of team members who have gone above the call of duty with enthusiasm and zest for their work.

The Court Liaisons are, as their title implies, liaisons between the Court and the Children's Department. They are responsible for interagency communication, representing the Department in Court, fostering interdivisional planning, assisting the Court with appropriate referrals and general assistance to children and families, peers and court personnel.

Often working behind the scenes, the liaisons recently had the spotlight shone on them as one of four Department teams to be nominated for the Governor's first-ever Team Excellence Award.

"All of our service divisions and the Courts, as well as the kids we serve, depend on the liaisons for assistance in smooth court appearances," said cabinet secretary, Cari DeSantis. "They are a vital part of our Department and provide great support towards our System of Care approach."

The liaisons are not only an asset to the Department, Court and families; they are also integral to each other's success. It



New Castle County liaisons gather in a courtroom with their supervisor, Karen Triolo. (L to R) Kyscha Barrett, Donna Holmberg, Ann Marie Bercy, Triolo, Margaret Zeigler and Monica Farrell.

is not uncommon for liaisons in different counties to travel and provide coverage for another office.

"Teamwork is being able to call on my liaison family for help when I need their assistance," says Yvette Guinn, Kent County Liaison.

Staff members are responsible for a large variety of critical interventions and go the extra mile in every situation to keep families together and safe. They can often be found in their court offices at 7:00 p.m. waiting with a youth for a worker to come and transport them to protective or foster placements.

"I've only supervised the liaisons for a short period of time, but during that time I've observed numerous instances where they were true team players," said Karen Triolo, family services program support supervisor. "They are constantly supporting one another, helping one another. They're a great group and I'm really excited to be a part of this team."



(L to R) Barbara Beaman (Sussex County liaison), Yvette Guinn (Kent County liaison) and Cindy Jones (Sussex County liaison).

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH WILMINGTON POLICE TO HELP TRAUMATIZED YOUTH

(continued from cover)

The CD-CP will help children and families in Wilmington who have witnessed or experienced violence by: providing immediate and follow-up counseling services through the Division of Child Mental Health

Services; teach skills needed for children to cope with the aftermath of violence and other overwhelming events; coordinate services that will help families feel safe again; and respond to emergencies 24 hours a day.

Services provided by the CD-CP are confidential and fees are never a barrier to services. For further information, contact the Division of Child Mental Health Services-Child Priority Response Team at 1-800-722-7710.



Chris Dolley, deputy director of the William 'Hicks' Anderson Community Center, Wilmington Police Chief Michael Szczerba, Rev. Derrick Johnson, Lt. Governor John Carney, Lisa Blunt-Bradley, director of the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, Sgt. Dennis O'Connor, Bob Dunleavy, Secretary Cari DeSantis, Mayor James Baker and Public Safety Director James Mosley gathered together to announce the beginning of the Child Development-Community Policing project in Wilmington.

MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY FOR DELAWARE'S CHILDREN. OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS TO PROVIDE AND MANAGE A RANGE OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABANDONMENT, ABUSE, ADJUDICATION, MENTAL ILLNESS, NEGLECT OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE; AND WE ENDORSE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENABLE CHILDREN TO REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

VISION STATEMENT

OUR VISION IS TO THINK OF THE CHILD FIRST!

WE WANT EVERY CHILD TO BE SAFE AND HAVE STABILITY, SELF-ESTEEM, AND A SENSE OF HOPE. THE DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT WILL LEAD A SYSTEM OF CARE (BOTH COMMUNITY BASED AND RESIDENTIAL) THAT IS CHILD CENTERED AND ASSURES EFFECTIVE, TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR DELAWARE'S CHILDREN. WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR MISSION WHEN FAMILIES, STAFF, COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS THINK OF THE CHILD FIRST. OUR ACTIVITIES INCLUDE PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION, ASSESSMENT, TREATMENT, PERMANENCY, AND AFTER CARE. THE DEPARTMENT WILL OFFER DESIRABLE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES, ATTRACTING AND RETAINING PROUD AND TALENTED EMPLOYEES WHO ARE MOTIVATED TO THINK OF THE CHILD FIRST IN ALL THAT THEY DO.

TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT,
CALL THE 24-HOUR REPORT LINE:

1-800-292-9582

For information on becoming a foster parent, call the Delaware Helpline:
1-800-464-4357

"Seen and Heard" is the quarterly newsletter of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (The Delaware Children's Department).

Tell us what you think: **1-302-633-2500**

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Cari DeSantis, Cabinet Secretary

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